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willful

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will·ful | \ 'wil-fəl \ variants: or wilful

Definition of *willful*

1 : obstinately and often perversely self-willed a stubborn and willful child

2 : done deliberately : [intentional](#) willful disobedience

[Other Words from *willful*](#) [Synonyms & Antonyms](#) [Choose the Right Synonym](#) [More Examples](#)

[Sentences](#) [Learn More About *willful*](#)

Other Words from *willful*

willfully \ 'wil-fə-lē \ adverb

willfulness noun

Synonyms & Antonyms for *willful*

Synonyms

- [balky](#),

- [contrary](#),
- [contumacious](#),
- [defiant](#),
- [disobedient](#),
- [foward](#),
- [incompliant](#),
- [insubordinate](#),
- [intractable](#),
- [obstreperous](#),
- [rebel](#),
- [rebellious](#),
- [recalcitrant](#),
- [recusant](#),
- [refractory](#),
- [restive](#),
- [ungovernable](#),
- [unruly](#),
- [untoward](#),
- [wayward](#)

Antonyms

- [amenable](#),
- [biddable](#),
- [compliant](#),
- [conformable](#),
- [docile](#),
- [obedient](#),
- [ruly](#),
- [submissive](#),
- [tractable](#)

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Choose the Right Synonym for *willful*

[unruly](#), [ungovernable](#), [intractable](#), [refractory](#), [recalcitrant](#), [willful](#), [headstrong](#) mean not submissive to government or control. [unruly](#) implies lack of discipline or incapacity for discipline and often connotes waywardness or turbulence of behavior. [unruly](#) children [ungovernable](#) implies either an escape from control or guidance or a state of being unsubdued and incapable of controlling oneself or being controlled by others. [ungovernable](#) rage [intractable](#) suggests stubborn resistance to guidance or control. [intractable](#) opponents of the hazardous-waste dump [refractory](#) stresses resistance to attempts to manage or to mold. special schools for [refractory](#) children [recalcitrant](#) suggests determined resistance to or defiance of authority. acts of sabotage by a [recalcitrant](#) populace [willful](#) implies an obstinate determination to have one's own way. a [willful](#) disregard for the rights of others [headstrong](#) suggests self-will impatient of restraint, advice, or suggestion. a [headstrong](#) young cavalry officer

Examples of *willful* in a Sentence

a stubborn and *willful* child He has shown a *willful* disregard for other people's feelings.

Recent Examples on the Web Students often don't show up for reasons that aren't *willful*: Some struggle with getting a ride to school. — Lily Altavena, *Detroit Free Press*, 17 Nov. 2021 These approaches to history, while the products of different eras, share a *willful* disregard for -- and desire among some to obscure or deny -- the more harrowing realities of America's racial past, and a focus on the classroom as a battleground. — Peniel E. Joseph,

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CNN, 30 Oct. 2021 That the woke left seems never to have read one suggests that its economic ignorance is *willful*. — WSJ, 8 Oct. 2021 [See More](#)

These example sentences are selected automatically from various online news sources to reflect current usage of the word 'willful.' Views expressed in the examples do not represent the opinion of Merriam-Webster or its editors. [Send us feedback](#).

First Known Use of *willful*

13th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

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Time Traveler for *willful*



The first known use of *willful* was in the 13th century

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Top 2% of words

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More Definitions for *willful*

willful

adjective

will·ful

variants: or wilful \ 'wil-fəl \

Kids Definition of *willful*

- 1 : stubborn sense 1 *willful* children
- 2 : intentional *willful* disobedience

Other Words from *willful*

willfully \ -fə-lē \ adverb
willfulness noun

willful

adjective
will·ful

variants: or wilful \ 'wil-fəl \ 

Legal Definition of *willful*

: not accidental : done deliberately or knowingly and often in conscious violation or disregard of the law, duty, or the rights of others willful injury

Other Words from *willful*

willfully adverb
willfulness noun

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